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MAKING IN ORDER AT ANY TIME
CONSIDERATION OF H.J. RES. 79,
FURTHER CONTINUING APPROPRIATIONS,
FISCAL YEAR 2004

Mr. YOUNG of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that it shall be in order at any time without intervention of any point of order to consider House Joint Resolution 79 in the House; the joint resolution shall be considered as read for amendment; the previous question shall be as ordered on the joint resolution to final passage without intervening motion except: one, 20 minutes of debate on the joint resolution, equally divided and controlled by the chairman and ranking member of the Committee on Appropriations; and, two, one motion to recommit.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SHIMKUS). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Florida?

There was no objection.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. YOUNG of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on H.J. Res. 79, and that I may include tabular and extraneous material.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Florida?

There was no objection.

FURTHER CONTINUING APPROPRIATIONS,
FISCAL YEAR 2004

Mr. YOUNG of Florida. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to the order of the House just adopted, I call up the joint resolution (H.J. Res. 79) making further continuing appropriations for the fiscal year 2004, and for other purposes, and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the title of the joint resolution.

The text of House Joint Resolution 79 is as follows:

H.J. RES. 79

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That Public Law 108-84 is amended by striking the date specified in section 107(c) and inserting "January 31, 2004."

SEC. 2. Section 8144(b) of the Department of Defense Appropriations Act, 2003 (Public Law 107-248), as amended by Public Law 108-84, is further amended by striking "November 21, 2003" and inserting "January 31, 2004".

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House today, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. YOUNG) and the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. OBEY) each will control 10 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Florida (Mr. YOUNG).

Mr. YOUNG of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, yesterday the House passed H.J. Res. 78, the fifth continuing resolution for fiscal year 2004, which extends the date of the current CR through Sunday, November 23. The Senate has chosen to amend this CR so that it would remain in effect until Monday, November 24.

We have, in turn, decided with the Senate leadership just to introduce a clean CR, H.J. Res. 79, that we are now considering. That would extend the date of the CR to January 31, 2004. I think I should be very clear of what this means. It is not our intention with this CR to allow it to run through January 31, but it will allow us great flexibility in scheduling the completion of our work on the final appropriations bills and at the same time ensure that there will not be any disruption in government operations. And I would like to point out, Mr. Speaker, that the Committee on Appropriations has done its job and did so quite a long time ago, but some of the issues that are keeping us from completing work on the actual bills have nothing to do with appropriations. But, nevertheless, they are there, and we do have to deal with them, and we are dealing with them as best we can.

We are proceeding with our work on the remaining appropriations bills. And as my colleagues know, there are two conference reports that have been ready for some time to file, the conference report on Transportation and Treasury and the conference report on Foreign Operations. However, as we proceed, we will finish the remaining bills as quickly as we can, and it will be leadership's decision on when the bills will be filed and when we will vote on it. We are proceeding with our work as diligently as we can.

Mr. Speaker, I believe this CR is non-controversial, and I urge the House to move the legislation to the Senate since the current CR does expire today.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. OBEY. Mr. Speaker I yield myself 6 minutes.

Mr. Speaker, as this joint resolution demonstrates, we are in another year that simply refuses to end. Last year we did not see this Congress finish the work that was supposed to be done by October 1 until well into the winter of the next calendar year. At that time the majority party in the House blamed that inability to get the work done on the fact that there was a majority of the other party in the other body.

This year they do not have Tom Daschle to kick around anymore. This year the Republicans control it all. They control the White House. They control the House. They control the Senate. They control the schedule. They control what gets to the floor. They control how long the votes are held open. They control everything. And yet we are in a situation where tonight, long after the fiscal year is supposed to be over, we still have not seen

the budgets passed for VA-HUD, for the State Department, for the Justice Department, for the Commerce Department. We have yet to see the foreign aid budget pass. We have yet to see the budget for the Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, social services agencies pass and the agriculture budget. I think we ought to ask why.

I do not believe that we are in this box because of any failure of the Committee on Appropriations leadership. I think we are in this box because the Republican House leadership is insisting on having every decision made in a top-down style. That means that the only real decisions that count except on minor matters are those made in the office of the Speaker or in the office of the majority leader.

No conferees are appointed unless they agree with the leadership's position on major issues. And yet even after rigging those conferences, even after stacking those conferences, when they still cannot win the votes that they need to win in those stacked conferences, they simply adjourn those conferences and then put legislation together in some off-corner office without any meaningful participation by anybody except perhaps some unelected members of the leadership's staff. So much for the legislative process in what used to be regarded as the greatest deliberative body in the world.

This process is about as respectful of rank and file Members as an AARP board meeting is respectful of the senior citizens they supposedly represent. On the same night that legislation is going to be considered that will bankrupt Medicare, we see the ultimate degradation of the legislative process at the same time as it is demonstrated in the appropriations process.

It is not often, Mr. Speaker, that one can do in senior citizens and the democratic process on the same night, but the House leadership should be congratulated because they have managed to find a way.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. YOUNG of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 2 minutes.

I just would like to point out, and I have done this so many times that it does not hurt to be repeated. The House completed its work during the summer, ahead of the end of the fiscal year. And I appreciate the cooperation we had from both parties as we proceeded with our appropriations bills. I am not here to blame anybody, and I certainly would not blame anybody but circumstances.

The Committee on Appropriations, as the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. OBEY) pointed out, we had to do all of last year's work this year in January and February. Then we had three supplementals plus we did the 13 regular bills. This Committee on Appropriations has done its work. It has done its work well, and it has done its work